Yelp for Job Ads: What Hiring Can Learn from Online Markets

Imagine you're hungry for Italian food. You drive past 50 places, each claiming to serve "The Best Pasta in Town!" But when you pull in, half of them are closed. A few don't serve spaghetti at all. One makes you fill out three forms before telling you they'll call you if they decide to cook.

Absurd, right?

In any other market, you'd read reviews, filter the noise, and skip the places that don't deliver. Yelp, Google, TripAdvisor—these user-powered platforms protect our time and trust.

But in hiring? No such luck. Despite billions of users and millions of listings, the job market remains one of the only digital marketplaces with no built-in user review system.

When classified ads moved online, many industries quickly realized that platforms alone couldn't police quality. So they handed the mic to users:

- **eBay** added buyer/seller ratings.

- **Zillow** gave tenants tools to evaluate landlords.

- **Uber** and **Lyft** implemented mutual reviews.

- **Yelp** turned diners into the watchdogs of fine dining.

Why? Because people trust people. Not corporations. Not slogans. Patterns of behavior, verified by peers, build confidence and save time.

Yet hiring skipped this evolution.

Job seekers—who make up over 90% of users on job platforms—can't leave reviews. Can't flag misinformation. Can't tell others when an ad is fake, when a recruiter ghosts, or when an interview process disrespects their time.

And the results are predictable.

For job seekers:

- Listings are outdated or never real.

- Salaries are hidden.

- Recruiters vanish mid-process.

- Employers ghost after interviews.

- There's no way to warn others.

For employers:

- Resume spam floods inboxes.

- Applicants apply blindly.

- No-shows and drop-offs grow.

- Trust in employer brand erodes.

Meanwhile, job platforms profit from engagement—not successful outcomes. That means frustration is part of the business model.

And when one side of the market is forced to navigate in the dark, both sides lose. Because every time a job seeker gets burned, they become more likely to apply indiscriminately, disengage entirely, or drop out of the pipeline.

Employers, in turn, see poor matches, high churn, and dwindling ROI. The system traps both sides in a loop of inefficiency—and no one is held accountable.

In any other marketplace, we'd call this rent-seeking. A platform extracting value while failing to deliver it. Essentially creating a magic claw machine in tech form by gaining further profit failing to create the outcomes its users were seeking.

The fix? It's not complicated. It's just overdue.

A functional job market would let people talk to each other.

- Job seekers rating employment postings after experiencing their hiring processes.

- Employers adjusting their processes to better meet the needs of job seekers they are trying to attract.

- Verified postings reduce scams and ghost listings.

- Feedback from both sides creates market innovations that benefit the relationship between the stakeholders, not the lack of one.

This isn't revolutionary. It's how every successful platform—from Airbnb to Etsy—works. Two-way transparency. Mutual accountability.

But in hiring, it hasn't been tried at scale. Yet.

And that means we're not just facing a tech problem. We're facing a design problem—one that treats job seekers as disposable, rather than as stakeholders.

It doesn't have to stay that way. If employers want better outcomes, and platforms want long-term trust, we need to stop treating the labor market like a one-sided vending machine.

It's time that the work we and other new and emerging companies are doing building things like a "Google Reviews" for hiring become bigger. Not to shame companies, but to help everyone—job seekers, employers, and platforms alike—stop wasting time on what doesn't work and start focusing on what does.